

CAVE DWELLING IN THE MOLOSSID BAT

Tadarida jobensis colonicus

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As part of a flora and fauna survey of the Katherine Gorge National Park, three specimens of the Northern Mastiff-bat (*Tadarida jobensis colonicus*) were collected from a small cave beneath a rock ledge overhanging the Katherine River (A.M.G. 5369-264162).

The crack was about 500mm long and 50mm wide. The overhang was 20m wide and extended 14m under the cliff which forms one side of the main Gorge. At the time of collection (16 October 1981) the cave was 5m above the water line, but is completely flooded in the wet season.

Two males and one female (pregnant-one foetus) were collected from the cave, along with two male Large-footed Myotis (*Myotis adversus*).

The form *colonicus* has not previously been reported as roosting in caves (Hamilton - Smith, 1964, 1966) although extra - limital subspecies of *T. jobensis* are known to (cf. Troughton, 1931). As discussed by Hamilton - Smith (1966), the habit of Molossidae of squeezing into narrow cracks may be the reason for cave-dwelling individuals escaping attention until now.

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